

**If you or someone you love is getting the flu vaccine, ask your doctor or nurse how best to take care of someone after receiving the vaccine.**

### ■ Thimerosal

Some inactivated flu vaccine contains thimerosal, a form of mercury, as a preservative. Some contains only a trace of thimerosal. There is no scientific evidence that thimerosal in vaccines is harmful, and the known benefits of the vaccine outweigh any potential risk from thimerosal. If you have questions about thimerosal or reduced-thimerosal flu vaccine, ask your doctor.

### ■ The Myth of the Stomach Flu

Some people mistakenly call illnesses with nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea “stomach flu.” These symptoms can be caused by many different viruses, bacteria, or even parasites. Sometimes children with influenza have vomiting or diarrhea, but this is uncommon. Influenza (the flu) is a respiratory disease, which means it affects the nose, throat, and lungs. The flu is not a stomach or intestinal disease.

### ■ How To Know if You Have the Flu

The flu is more severe than a cold. Influenza usually comes on suddenly, lasts for several days, and includes some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches

**Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who are having any of these symptoms.**

There are other illnesses affecting the nose, throat, and lungs that cause similar symptoms. It is impossible to tell for sure if you have the flu based on symptoms alone. Doctors can perform tests to see if you have the flu if you are in the first few days of your illness.

**Influenza is caused by a virus, so antibiotics (like penicillin) don’t work to cure it. The best way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccine every fall.**

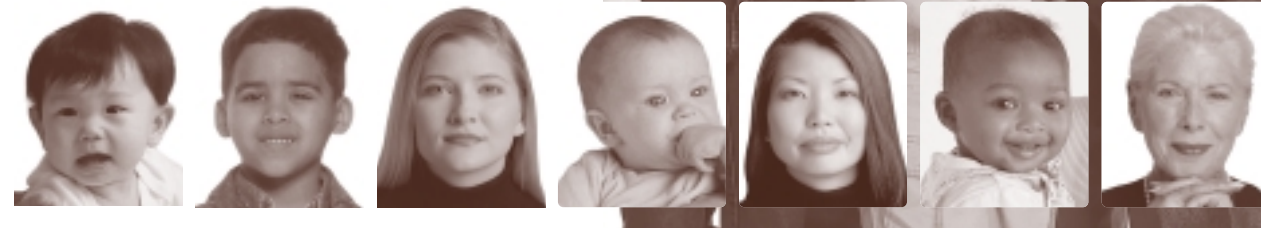
### ■ Protect your family and those you love.

- Get the flu vaccine for yourself.
- Get the flu vaccine for your child.
- Get the flu vaccine for those at risk.

For more information, call your doctor, your local health department or

**1-888-76-SHOTS**

**Michigan Department of Community Health**



More information is on the Internet at:

[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)

[www.vaccineinfo.org](http://www.vaccineinfo.org)

# Keep Your Family Safe from the Flu

- Children under 2 years old are at high risk for hospitalizations caused by the flu.
- On average, more than 36,000 people in the U.S. die from the flu or its complications each year.
- Influenza (flu) attacks everyone, regardless of age, sex, or race. Talk to your doctor about vaccinating yourself and your family.

## ■ How do people get the flu?

Influenza is caused by a virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. It can spread through the air when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or talks.



## ■ Anyone can get the flu, but it is more severe for some people

Most people who catch the flu are sick for several days, but get better. But the flu can make some people very sick or even kill them. These people are called high risk. They should get the flu vaccine every year. Household members (including brothers and sisters) and other people in close contact with high-risk persons should also get the flu vaccine every year, in order to protect them.

These people have the greatest risk for flu disease and should receive a flu shot every October:

- All children 6 to 23 months of age
- All adults 50 years or older
- People living in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

• All persons 6 months of age and older with an ongoing health problem including:

- Asthma or other lung diseases
- Diabetes
- Immune suppression
- Kidney disease
- Heart disease
- HIV/AIDS
- Sickle cell anemia

• All pregnant women

- Children 6 months to 18 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Anyone who has a long-lasting health problem should talk to his or her doctor about getting a flu shot.

## ■ Should everyone in the family get the flu vaccine?

Because the flu is easy to catch, anyone could bring the virus to someone at risk. Family members of people at risk should get the flu vaccine every year. These include:

- Family members (including brothers and sisters) and close contacts (such as caregivers) of all children 0 to 23 months of age. Infants under 6 months of age are too young to get the flu vaccine, but they can get very sick from the flu.
- Family members and household contacts of people with ongoing health problems that put them at risk for flu. Some of these health conditions include asthma and other lung diseases, diabetes, immune suppression, kidney disease, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, and sickle cell anemia.

**If you have a family member of any age with a heart or lung problem, it is very important that they get the flu vaccine. The people who live with and take care of them should also get the flu vaccine.**

## ■ Health care workers

Health care workers should get the flu vaccine every fall. Don't give the flu to someone else. Protect your family and patients.

**When you get the flu vaccine, you are protecting your family, friends, and coworkers, as well as yourself!**



## ■ Can people still get the flu even if they get flu vaccine?

Some people just happen to catch a cold a week or two after they got the flu vaccine. This is not a result of the flu vaccine — the flu is not a cold.

Sometimes, people may still get the flu even though they got the flu vaccine. This sometimes happens to elderly people. When this takes place, these people don't get as sick as they would have if they had not gotten the flu vaccine.

## ■ How often should people get the flu vaccine?

Most people should get one dose of flu vaccine every year, in October or November. The flu vaccine only lasts a year, so you need to get it every year.

A child under 9 years old getting the flu vaccine for the first time needs a second dose of the flu vaccine one month after the first dose.

## ■ Are there any risks when you get the flu vaccine?

Sometimes, people have mild problems after receiving the flu vaccine, like soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. People might get a mild fever and some aches. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the vaccine was given, last 1 to 2 days, and get better on their own.

Vaccines, like any other medicines, can possibly cause serious problems. However, serious problems from the flu vaccine are very rare.

It is important to understand that the chance of being harmed by this disease is far greater than any chance of being harmed by the vaccine.